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Reasons of the Intrusion of Rohingya Refugee in Bangladesh and their Socio-demographic Circumstances

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Abstract

The main aim of the study is to figure out the reasons behind the intrusion of Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh. Moreover we focus on the current socio-demographic scenario of Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh. To do this some descriptive statistics and logistic regression analysis have been performed. In this research work it is observed that majority of Rohingya refugees are married (81.4%) at early age and female (59.3%) in sex. The number of children of married respondents is higher in general. Rohingya refugees experienced a variety of inhumanity torture on them by Myanmar army like rape, killing, assault, burning houses, plunder etc which lead them to be refugees in Bangladesh. Although a major portion of Rohingya refugees are not willing to go back to Myanmar, their homeland they wanted citizenship in Myanmar with all rights if they are forced to go back there.

Keywords: Rohingya; Refugee; Socio-demographic; Bangladesh; Myanmar.

1. Introduction and Literature Review

Bangladesh is one of the over populated country in South Asia. India and Myanmar are the closest neighboring states of Bangladesh with whom it shares its borders. Bangladesh has mostly welcomed the refugee flight of Rohingya from Myanmar and provided them protection under the ad hoc decisions for long time. The forced displacement of the Rohingya people from Myanmar and their influx to Bangladesh has given rise to a grave situation for Bangladesh with potentially serious consequences from a number of dimensions.

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The Rohingya people; historically also termed Arakanese Indians are a stateless Indo-Aryan people from Rakhine State, Myanmar. Refugees, by definition, are those fleeing from war, conflict, persecution, or a fear of persecution ([1,2]) that act in the decision to escape [3].

The Rohingyas constitute a Muslim minority living among the ethnically distinct Buddhist Rakhines in north Rakhine (Arakan) state of Myanmar, which lies along the international border with Bangladesh. They were denied “the right to own land or property”, amounting to a total land grab and subjected to many forms of discrimination in their everyday existence [4]. They are also restricted from freedom of movement, state education and civil service jobs. The Rohingyas were exposed to forced labour and routine violence including rape and killings, and also required to get permission for even matters concerning their personal lives such as getting married [5]. Nick Cheesman argued that “National races” or taingyintha is among the pre-eminent political ideas in Myanmar today [6]. He also noted that lexically and legally, national races trump citizenship. Kipgen exhibited that the Rohingya Muslims have not only been marginalized economically and socially but excluded politically both in the formation of Rakhine state government and the central government [7].

Imran and his colleagues showed that the number of Rohingya refugees’ flights has been gradually increasing to the extent and they are spoiling the reputation of Bangladesh in the international arena besides committing various crimes under the guise of fake Bangladeshi passport [8]. They suggested that Bangladesh should enact strict domestic laws to prevent the indirectly forced entrance of the Rohingya from Myanmar. Noor and his colleagues gave emphasis in their study on the concerns for Bangladesh in the context of food security, environment, tourism and national security and Rohingya refugees are considered an unbearable burden to Bangladesh [9]. Rahman claimed that the presence of Rohingya in Bangladesh has created a security dilemma for the host country [10]. He also argued that there are good reasons to regard it as a security concern for Bangladesh. Ullah conducted a study interviewing 134 Rohingya refugees from two camps in Cox’s-Bazar, Bangladesh [11]. Both his quantitative and qualitative analysis reinforced that the level of abuse and persecution perpetrated upon them surpass all human rights standards.

Myanmar military had launched “clearance operations” in 2016 against the Rohingya Muslims in Rakhine state that left over 6000 dead, many more injured, tortured or raped, villages burned. There were an estimated 1 million Rohingya living in Myanmar before the 2016–17 crises. On 22 Oct 2017, the UN reported that an estimated 603,000 refugees from Rakhine, Myanmar had crossed the border into Bangladesh since August 25, 2017. This number increased to 624,000 by November 7, 2017 and over 625,000 by December 6, 2017.

The global refugee crisis is an ongoing concern, with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reporting a sharp increase in forcibly displaced populations from 59.5 million in 2014 to 65.3 million in 2015 [12]. The UN human rights envoy to Myanmar reported “the long history of discrimination and persecution against the Rohingya community could amount to crimes against humanity and there have been warnings of an unfolding genocide.

So far we know a few academic research has been done to address the issues of Rohingya refugees as well as the reasons of their intrusion in Bangladesh, their miserable lives here in the camps, their future fate etc.

2. Geographical Characteristics of Rakhine State in Myanmar and Cox's Bazar District in Bangladesh

Rakhine State with an area of 36,778.0 km² is located at 19°30'N 94°0'E / 19.5000°N 94.000°E and bounded by Chin state to the north, Magway Region, Bago Region and Ayeyarwady Region to the east, the Bay of Bengal to the west and the Chittagong Division of Bangladesh to the northwest. Rakhine is one of the poorest states in Myanmar.

Cox's Bazar District has an area of 2,491.86 km². It is bounded by Chittagong District on the north, Bay of Bengal in the south, Bandarban District on the east, and the Bay of Bengal on the west. Major rivers include Matamuhuri, Bakkhali, Reju Khal, Naf River, Maheshkhali channel and Kutubdia channel.



Figure 1: Rakhine state in Myanmar and Cox's Bazar District in Bangladesh

The rest of the article is outlined as follows: Rationale and objectives of the study are discussed in section 3. Materials and Methods are described in section 4. In section 5 results and discussion are presented. Conclusion is exhibited in section 6. Constraints are discussed in section 7 followed by recommendations are in section 8. Finally references are cited.

3. Rationale and Objectives of the Study

We live in a rapidly changing world in which refugees and forced migration have a significant impact on the economic, political and social agendas of sovereign states, intergovernmental agencies and civil society groups. Today, tens of millions of people are refugees, raising fundamental challenges for governments around the world. They and their rights are in urgent need of protection. Developing an understanding of the causes and consequences of forced migration and gaining the intellectual and practical skills to deal effectively with its challenges are essential, both for addressing the causes of forced migration and for the management of effective programs to assist refugees and other forced migrants. There is no dearth of studies on Rohingya refugees has so

far received very little research attention. The specific objectives of the study are:

- ▶ To identify the factors, which motivate the Rohingya to entrance in Bangladesh;
- ▶ To know the wants of Rohingya refugees;
- ▶ To figure out willingness of going back to Myanmar;
- ▶ To find out whether there is any association between reason of entrance and selected variables of the background characteristics;
- ▶ To make a set of recommendations for addressing the Rohingya crisis.

4. Materials and Methods

Since most of Rohingya refugees are lived in different camps in Cox's Bazar districts in Bangladesh and for the benefit of communication we have selected the Cox's Bazar as our study area. Data was collected from from Kutupalong, Balukhali Rohingya camps and other places named Balukhali Bazar, Ukhia Ghat, Asian Highway, Checkpost and Kutupalong Bazar. Primary data was collected from a sample of 300 Rohingya refugees of age 11 years and above as respondent selected using purposive sampling technique. The interview schedule method is used to collect required information through a well structured questionnaire. The survey of the study was conducted for the period of 4 months from September, 2017 to December, 2017. In this research work simple descriptive statistics have been employed to make a comparison of the composition and present the distribution of respondent according to the selected explanatory variables to observe the current situations of Rohingya refugees. Binary logistic regression is performed considering the willingness to go back to Myanmar as dependent variable with some other related explanatory variables to study wants of Rohingya refugees with a view to validating the descriptive information and to figuring out the most influential variables. Microsoft Excel (2007) and Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 16 are used for all these analysis.

5. Results and Discussion

5.1. Descriptive Statistics

Table 1 reveals that the majority of respondents (59.3%) are female and rest of are male. It can be concluded from the Table 2 that 81.4% of the respondents are married. Table 3 tells that the majority (54.3%) of the Rohingya refugees are of age between 11 and 25 while 27.7% and 18% of Rohingya refugees are belong to age-group 26-40 and 41+ respectively. From Table 4 it is found that about 36.8% married respondents' age at first marriage is below 15 years of age and about 67.5% married respondents got married at age 20 years of below. Figure 2 exposes that about 67.8% Rohingya refugees were either farmer or labour or shopkeeper and only a few portions (6.4%) were businessman. Table 5 divulges that about 55% married respondents have 3 to 5 children and 13.5% have more than 5 children. From Table 6 it is observed that about 66.4% of the Rohingya refugees lost at least one of their family members. Table 7 tells that about 95% of Rohingya refugees crossed the

border very risky way either in mountain paths or by boats. From Table 8 it is observed that majority of Rohingya refugees (52%) are not willing to go back in Myanmar their homeland. From the Table 9 we observed that maximum of the respondents (87%) want the right of their citizenship in Myanmar while a few (13.9%) expect independence. Figure 3 notices that 95% of Rohingya refugees have a considerable reason to cross the border and take shelter in Bangladesh. Among them about 61.4% have strong ground to take shelter in Bangladesh.

Table 1: Sex distribution of the respondent

Sex of the respondent	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Male	122	40.7
Female	178	59.3
Total	300	100.0

Table 2: Marital status distribution of the respondent

Respondents' Marital Status	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Married	244	81.4
Unmarried	56	18.6
Total	300	100.0

Table 3: Distribution of respondent by age group

Respondents' Age Group	No. of respondent	Percentage
11-25	163	54.3
26-40	83	27.7
41-Above	54	18.0
Total	300	100.0

Table 4: Distribution of age at first marriage of married respondents

Respondents' Age at first Marriage	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Below 15	90	36.8
15 to 20	75	30.7
More than 20	79	32.5
Total	244	100.0

Table 5: Distribution of married respondent number by children

Respondents, no. of Children	No. of Respondents	Percentage
0	4	1.6
1	19	7.8
2	54	22.1
3	45	18.5
4	50	20.5
5	39	16.0
6	4	1.6
7	19	7.8
8	6	2.5
9	4	1.6
Total	244	100.0

Table 6: Loss of family members' distribution

loss of family member	No. of Respondents	Percentage
0 or no loss of family member	101	33.6
losing one family member	51	17.1
2 family members loss or killed	105	35.0
3 family members loss or killed	26	8.6
4 or more family members loss or killed	17	5.7
Total	300	100.0

Table 7: Distribution of respondent by the way of crossing the border

Way of crossing border	No. of Respondents	Percentage
By boat	154	51.4
Mountainous path	131	43.6
Road	15	5.0
Total	300	100.0

Table 8: Distribution of respondent by willingness of going back in Myanmar

Willingness	No. of Respondents	Percentage
No	156	52.1
Yes	144	47.9
Total	300	100.0

Table 9: Distribution of respondents by rights wanted

Right wanted	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Independence	39	12.9
Citizenship	261	87.1
Total	300	100.0

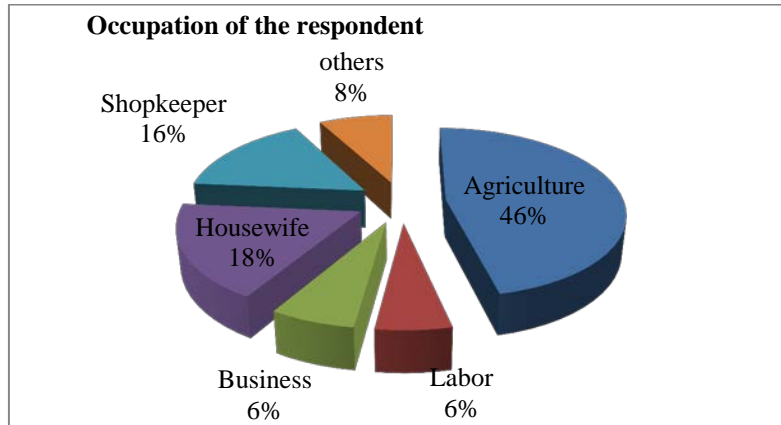


Figure 2: Occupation of the respondent in Myanmar

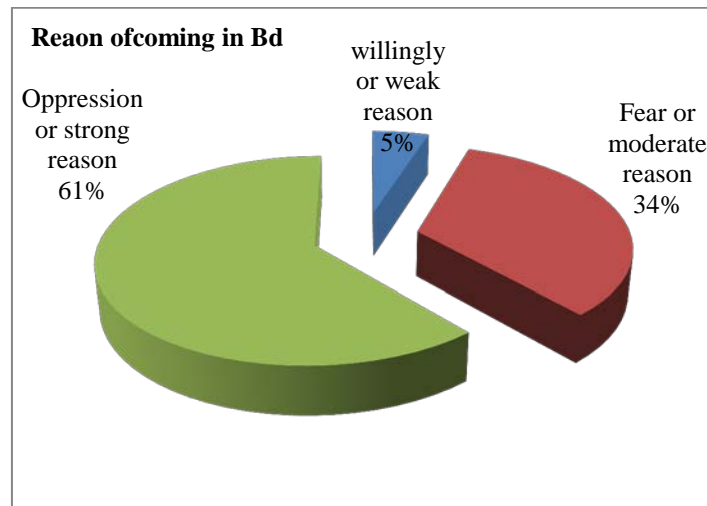


Figure 3: Reason of coming in Bangladesh

5.2. Logistic Regression

The following binary logistic regression model (1) is fitted for the collected data considering willingness of going back in Myanmar (WGBM) [Yes=1 and No=0] as dependent variable with six selected explanatory variables and the model summary and outputs are presented in Table 10 and Table 11 respectively. Binary logistic regression model:

$$\text{WGBM} = \beta_0 + \beta_1(\text{Rape}) + \beta_2(\text{Assault}) + \beta_3(\text{Plunder}) + \beta_4(\text{Firing Houses}) + \beta_5(\text{Killing}) + \beta_6(\text{Restricted Mobility}) + \epsilon \quad (1)$$

For this model the Cox-Snell R^2 square is 0.227 and Nagelkerke R^2 is 0.303 which tell the model fit is moderate. From the outputs of logistic regression in Table 11 it is observed that rape, firing houses, killing and restricted mobility are found to be statistically significant on the willingness of going back in Myanmar while assault and plunder are insignificant. The odds ratio for rape is 0.317 indicates that the Rohingya refugee who is raped is 0.68 times less likely to go back in Myanmar. The odds ratio for killing is 0.459 which shows that the refugee who faced killing or life threats is 0.54 times less likely to going back in Myanmar. Restricted mobility is also found to have influence on the willingness of going back in Myanmar. The odds ratio for restricted mobility is 0.081 indicating that the refugee who faced restricted mobility in Myanmar is 0.909 times less likely to go back in Myanmar. The refugee who is assaulted is 1.389 times more likely for go back in Myanmar and the respondents who faced plunder is 1.930 times more likely to go back in Myanmar. The odds ratio for firing in houses is 4.946 which indicate that the refugee who faced firing in their houses is 4.946 times more likely to go back in Myanmar.

Table 10: Model Summary

Step	-2 Log likelihood	Cox & Snell R Square	Nagelkerke R Square
1	157.731 ^a	.227	.303
a. Estimation terminated at iteration number 5 because parameter estimates changed by less than .001.			

Table 11: Outputs of binary logistic model

Variables	B	S.E.	Wald	d.f.	Sig.	Exp(B)	95.0% C.I. for Exp(B)	
							Lower	Upper
Rape	-1.148	.526	4.766	1	.029	.317	.113	.889
Assault	.329	.523	.395	1	.530	1.389	.499	3.871
Plunder	.657	.403	2.655	1	.103	1.930	.875	4.254
Firing Houses	1.599	.511	9.790	1	.002	4.946	1.817	13.463
Killing	-.778	.463	2.829	1	.093	.459	.186	1.137
Restricted Mobility	-2.508	.899	7.785	1	.005	.081	.014	.474
Constant	1.369	.897	2.328	1	.127	3.931		

6. Conclusion

In this study it is observed that majority of Rohingya refugees are married (81.4%) and female (59.3%) in sex. Only 6.4% refugees' occupation were business and most of them (67.8%) were either farmers or labours or shopkeepers or other similar occupations. About 67.5% married refugees age at first marriage is 20 or below.

About 68.5% married Rohingya refugees have 3 or more children and which ranges up to 9. Around 66% of Rohingya refugees lost at least one of their family members during brutality by Myanmar army. To enter in to Bangladesh maximum (95%) of Rohingya refugees crossed the border in very risky way either in mountain paths or in river way by boat. Approximately 95% of Rohingya refugees have a valid ground and considerable reason to take shelter in Bangladesh and among them about 61.4% have a strong ground or oppression to cross the border. Majority of Rohingya refugees (52%) are not willing to go back to their homeland. This might be due to their horror experiences like rape, assault, killing, firing houses etc. The Rohingya refugees who are either assaulted or plundered or faced firings in houses are more likely to go back to Myanmar. But the Rohingya refugees who faced killing or life threats or restricted mobility or raped are less likely to go back to Myanmar because of such horror experience. Most of the Rohingya refugees are demanded the complete citizenship that is they must have access all rights as a citizen if they have to go back in Myanmar. The Rohingya refugees have been subject to miserable living conditions marked by inadequate access to basic needs, exposure to violence, restricted movement, local hostility, and various forms of discrimination. It can be concluded that Rohingya refugees experienced a various forms of discrimination and torture like assault, rape, burning of houses, killing by the Myanmar army and hence they are not willing to go back to their ethnic homeland without ensuring all rights as a citizen.

7. Constraints

Due to time and fund constraints only a small sample of Rohingya refugees is considered as respondents for the study. Moreover lack of proper sampling frame (complete list of Rohingya refugees), purposive sampling technique is used to select the required sampling units instead of using probability sampling technique.

8. Recommendations

In view of the emergent challenges, a number of measures need to be undertaken. Some of the seare as follows:

- * The Government of Bangladesh has to continue energetic diplomacy with regional partners to solve the Rohingya refugee problem;
- * Diplomacy should be continued also with governments of other countries specially those are influencial;
- * Platforms such as BIMSTEC and BCIM which aim to deepening regional and sub-regional trade, investment and transport connectivity should be used for arriving at a solution;
- * Extra-regional platforms such as ASEAN can be engaged to play a role for addressing the crisis.
- * Preparation for post-Geneva follow-up meeting for resource mobilization has to begin now.
- * Support for the Rohingyas from the donors such as the World Bank, the UN should be unpacked.

- * Security measures in the Rohingya camps and adjacent areas, particularly in the Southern of the country have to be strengthened.
- * The law enforcing agencies have to be vigilant to stop illegal activities, drug trade, trafficking and terrorism.

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